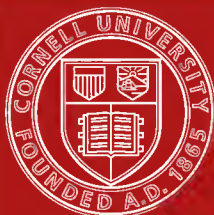


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THE STUDY
of
ANGLO-NORMAN

Inaugural Lecture delivered
before the University of Oxford on
6 February 1920

by
PAUL STUDER

*Taylorian Professor
of the Romance Languages*

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THE STUDY OF ANGLO-NORMAN

THIS lecture is long overdue and I apologize for the delay. When I had the honour to be elected to the Professorship of Romance Languages in the University of Oxford, it was my intention to deal with the Study of Anglo-Norman in an Inaugural Lecture, but owing first to the War, and then to ill health, I have been hindered until now from carrying out my intention.

I must further apologize for the choice of my subject. Modern thoughts and modern studies are the fashion of the day, and it requires a little courage, even in this ancient seat of learning, to urge the claims of mediaeval lore. I hope, however, that my motive will not be wrongly interpreted, for I need hardly say how sincerely I welcome the establishment of a Chair of French Literature¹ in this University. Thanks to the benefactions of Sir Basil Zaharoff and Mr. Heath Harrison², our students will have exceptional facilities for acquainting themselves with the intellectual and social movements of Modern France, and I trust that increasing numbers of them will avail themselves of these advantages. But I would plead that the Middle Ages should be better known, especially that period of the Middle Ages in which France and England shared a common language and a common literature, and took part in the same social and religious activity. The study of Anglo-Norman,

¹ The Marshal Foch Chair of French Literature was endowed by the munificence of Sir Basil Zaharoff.

² Mr. Heath Harrison bequeathed the sum of £20,000 for the creation of Travelling Scholarships and the promotion of Modern Language Studies in the University of Oxford.

revealing, as it must, the points of contact as well as the differences between the two nations, will lead to surer knowledge and greater mutual appreciation. Above all it will throw much light on English history, social and constitutional, on Middle-English, one might even say pre-Shakespearian literature, and particularly on the growth and evolution of the English language.

I ought at the outset to explain why I have retained the old-fashioned name of 'Anglo-Norman' in preference to that of 'Anglo-French', which has been proposed by many scholars. My first consideration has been one of expediency. 'Anglo-French' has a distinctly modern flavour; at all events it is ambiguous, and cannot be used without further qualification. The term 'Anglo-Norman' is, however, quite definite. It is universally applied to the period which extends from the Conquest to the time when the two races, with their respective languages and characteristics, blended into *one* homogeneous nation. I do not think that it has ever been challenged by historians, although some philologists have taken exception to its use. They urge that the French introduced by William the Conqueror was 'in its origin a mixture of various Norman and other Northern French dialects'¹ or 'that the characteristics of all the Northern French dialects were reflected in various regions of England'². In short, that among the invaders and their descendants there prevailed a confusion of tongues, a very Tower of Babel, which might be labelled 'French' but could not be called 'Norman'. Such a conclusion is, however, contrary to facts. Indeed there is considerable evidence to show that at no period before the close of the fourteenth

¹ J. A. H. Murray, *New Engl. Dict.*, general explanation, p. x.

² H. A. Sturmfels, *Anglia*, viii (1885), p. 212. A similar view has been expressed by Miss Pope in her *Étude sur la langue de Frère Angier*, Paris, 1903, pp. 4-5.

century did any great divergence of speech exist among those who naturally used French in this Island. The erroneous conception can, however, be accounted for to some extent, especially if we bear in mind that continental Norman was not a homogeneous dialect, and that in phonetic development it lay across the border line of Western and North-Eastern French. Even to-day French *chat* is pronounced *kā* (for older *kat*) in the greater part of Normandy; whereas Fr. *chant* is pronounced *kā* (older *kant*) only along the eastern fringe. On the other hand for Fr. *chasse*, the pronunciations *kash* (older *kache*) and *shas* (older *chace*) are very evenly distributed. In the same way Fr. *cerise* is pronounced *shriz* or *sheriz* (older *cherise*) in the greater part of the province, but for Fr. *cercle* the pronunciation *shekl* or *sherkl* (older *chercle*) is confined to a few isolated areas.¹ From these examples we can infer that, as a rule, the pronunciation more widely spread in Normandy alone survived in England; or if the rarer pronunciation was also retained, it was restricted to a special meaning, e.g. Engl. 'cant' by the side of 'chant'. It is interesting to note that the form *chace* (*chase*) alone occurs in literary texts and became fashionable, while *cache* continued to find favour among the menial classes; hence the double pronunciation and double meaning in Modern English.

Although the spelling of scribes is a poor guide, there is reason to suppose that the pronunciation soon became more uniform in England than it ever was in Normandy. The phenomenon is not without parallel in European history. At home the Romans spoke a variety of dialects—the divergence of Italian dialects is notorious and in many cases goes back to great antiquity—but they imposed on their vast dominions a language which was practically uniform. Recent history furnishes us with an example not less

¹ Cf. Gilliéron et Edmont, *Atlas linguistique*.

striking. Men from various parts of the British Isles have taken to the Colonies their peculiarities of speech, but they in their own lifetime, or at all events their descendants, have gradually discarded those peculiarities, and adopted the characteristic pronunciation and phraseology which enables us to tell the Australian from the Anglo-Indian, the Cape Colonist from the Canadian. In the same way as British settlers, with their Scottish, Irish, or Welsh accents, their local drawls and intonations, and their varied colloquialisms, have created in each foreign region a fairly uniform standard of speech, the Normans of the eleventh and twelfth centuries introduced into this country a language which was practically uniform. In both cases the determining factors were essentially the same, namely, the influence of literature and the existence of an official language.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries Paris did not possess the prestige it was destined to acquire during the following age. On the ruins of the Carolingian Empire the descendants of Hugh Capet were laying the foundations of the new kingdom of France, but their task was beset by many difficulties; some of their feudatories were in open rebellion; others, like the Dukes of Normandy, professed allegiance, but wielded greater power and influence than their nominal overlords. Thanks to superior statesmanship the Normans, within their own borders, mitigated the evils of feudalism and set up an efficient government. Nay more, the sons of those who ruthlessly pillaged and destroyed the monasteries to such an extent that 'in Normandy scarcely a church survives anterior to the tenth century',¹ became the protectors of the Church, and the champions of art and learning. The schools of Bec and Caen rose to fame before those of Paris. Latin was *par excellence* the language of

¹ C. H. Haskins, *The Normans in European History*, London, 1916, p. 35.

scholars, and was carried by them in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to a degree of perfection seldom equalled in later periods of the Middle Ages. But the Nobles, who contributed materially to this Early Renaissance, and began to feel the fascination of intellectual pursuits, were as a rule ignorant of Latin. To enlist their support and sympathy scholars must needs address them in French. Thus arose in Normandy a literary language which, thanks no doubt to the fruitful influence of the revival of classical studies, revealed itself in the first two masterpieces which Northern French can boast of, the *Vie de S. Alexis* and the *Chanson de Roland*, as an instrument of power and promise. This language differed little from that of educated Parisians, and underwent few changes until about the year 1160.¹ It produced the most abundant harvest of masterpieces witnessed in any period of mediaeval French, the epic songs of *Roland* and *Guillaume*, romances of classical inspiration, the love story of *Tristan*, the *Lays* which Marie de France tuned to Celtic melodies, and the remarkable *Chronicles* of Wace. That literary language, which was taught in the schools and spoken at the Court, could not fail to imprint a lasting character on the speech of all those who laid any claim to refinement and education.

Of greater importance, perhaps, than the influence of poets and schoolmasters, was the existence of a strong and fairly centralized government, first in Normandy and later

¹ Cf. G. Paris: 'Au XI^e siècle il est impossible de dire ce qui sépare le normand du français pur,' *Vie de S. Alexis*, Paris, 1872, p. 65; and again, 'Ce n'est qu'à une période qui n'est pas antérieure au XII^e siècle que se sont manifestées entre le langage des Français et celui des Normands certaines différences,' *op. cit.*, p. 42. The year 1160, as marking the end of the first A.-N. period, was suggested by Suchier, and has recently been confirmed by Tanqueray, cf. *Évolution du verbe en anglo-français*, Paris, 1915, p. 858. See also C. de Boer, *La Normandie et la renaissance classique dans la littérature française du XII^e siècle*, Groningue, 1912.

in England, using Latin in permanent records, but Norman French in councils, courts of justice, and baronial courts of all kinds.¹ Even the Merchant Guilds, which sprang up in England under the influence of foreign settlers, drew up their statutes and conducted their proceedings in a language which differed little from that used at Westminster or in contemporary literature.² In the eleventh century the Normans had lost nothing of the adventurous spirit of their Scandinavian ancestors. As pilgrims, merchants, or soldiers, or a combination of all three, they found their way into many parts of France and Spain, and visited every Mediterranean port. While their Duke was securing his hold over England, other bands of Normans established a powerful kingdom in the south of Italy. But the high-water mark of Norman power was reached in the twelfth century, when the dominions of Henry II extended from Scotland to the Pyrenees, and the clever diplomacy of the monarch seemed on the point of bringing all western Europe under his sway. Henry was Angevin by birth, but, as Haskins has forcibly urged in his recent history of the Normans, it was as Duke of Normandy that he rose to power, and it was thanks to Norman organization and statesmanship that he was able to consolidate his vast dominions. 'No Angevin influence is traceable in the field of finance, and none seems probable in the administration of justice.'³ His subjects belonged to many races and

¹ The publications of Maitland furnish the proof that even when the court was presided over by an ecclesiastical lord, the pleading was done in French, although the enrolment of it was in Latin. *Court Baron* (Selden Soc.), p. 15.

² Many of the Guilds, those of London, Ipswich, Winchester, Southampton, &c., were doubtless in existence in the twelfth century, but their Laws have generally reached us in thirteenth- or even in fourteenth-century versions. Cf. C. Gross, *The Gild Merchant*, Oxford, 1890.

³ Haskins, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

tongues, but 'over the various languages and dialects ran the Latin of the law and government, and the French of the court and affairs.'¹ The theory, that under the Plantagenets the language received a strong admixture of Angevin, does not rest on sufficient evidence.² The empire which the Normans had built up so rapidly was pre-eminently a maritime power. The sea-borne trade with Gascony soon became a source of wealth to the monarch and to the community, and furnished the Normans with an opportunity to show their genius for organization. The relations between skippers and merchants on the one hand, between captains and their crews on the other, were regulated; the duties and obligations of all concerned were clearly defined; and for the first time since the days of the Romans, law and order was introduced into a realm where anarchy and violence had long reigned supreme. These old sea-laws, known under the name of *Rolls of Oléron* were drawn up in Anglo-Norman about the time of King Richard I.³

Thus literature and education on the one hand, government and trade on the other, contributed powerfully to mould the speech of the Frenchmen, who streamed into this country in the wake of the Conqueror, into one homogeneous language. But this language once established in England developed independently. For reasons still

¹ Haskins, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

² It has been held by Miss Pope: 'La langue ordinaire qui avait cours était d'une nature composite, car au normand-picard du XI^e siècle, qui en formait probablement la base, s'était ajouté au cours du XII^e siècle, un fort élément angevin (poitevin).' *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

³ Some years ago I made a careful comparison of the oldest versions of the *Rolls of Oléron*, both Continental and English, and showed that they came from a common source *x*, written in A.-N. (*Oak Book of Southampton*, vol. ii, p. lxiv). But, as M. Ch. Bémont pointed out in a very generous review of my work (*Revue Historique*, cix (1912), p. 395), my further contention that *x* was probably derived from a Gascon original is based on evidence altogether too slight.

imperfectly known, it changed somewhat more rapidly than the dialects of the Continent. This was due, in some measure at least, to the constant contact with another language. Increasing numbers of Englishmen learnt to speak it. 'Uplondisshe men wil likne thymself to gentil men and fondeth with greet besynesse for to speke Frense, for to be i-tolde of', says Trevisa¹, and some of them, like Thomas Becket, rose to the highest dignities in Church and State. On the other hand, the Normans, who at first despised the language of the vanquished, and compared it to the bark of dogs,² began from necessity or through mere curiosity to familiarize themselves with it, and even with the literature. Marie de France and Denis Piramus both assure us that they used English models, the one for her *Fables*,³ the other for his *Vie Seint Edmund le Rei*:⁴ and Geffrei Gaimar, in his *Estorie des Engleis*, borrowed several points from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.⁵ By the thirteenth century most of the Norman English and many of the Saxon English were bilingual, but the contention of Schreibern⁶ that 'to both classes of the population French was now an acquired language', is not supported by facts. It is based largely on a mistaken interpretation of the anti-foreign feeling which manifested itself in the reign of Henry III. The movement was directed, not against the French language, but against the king's policy which

¹ Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, lib. i, cap. 59.

² Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii. 8094-5.

³ The English original has left unmistakable marks on the work of Marie de France. Cf. *Die Fabeln der Marie de France*, ed. Warnke, p. xlv.

⁴ Cf. 'Translaté l'ai desqu'a la fin E de l'engleis e del latin' 3267-8, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, ed. Lord Francis Hervey, London, 1907.

⁵ Cf. M. Gross, 'Geffrei Gaimar, die Komposition seiner Reimchronik und sein Verhältnis zu den Quellen,' *Roman. Forschungen*, xvi (1904), I.

⁶ O. Schreibern, *Über die Herrschaft d. franz. Sprache in England*, Annaberg, 1880, p. 28.

tended to supplant Norman barons by foreigners more amenable to royal authority; and the *Provisions of Oxford*, which marked the triumph of the barons, were drawn up in French.

Until the middle of the fourteenth century Anglo-Norman remained in every sense of the term a 'living' language, and the natural medium of expression of a considerable portion of the population, of the king's household, the nobility, the clergy, and even the merchants.¹ Nay more, it was steadily gaining ground. A recent investigation² has shown that before 1300 few letters were written in Anglo-Norman except by members of the aristocracy, but fifty years later all but the lowest classes of the community conducted their correspondence in that language. But bilingualism, the severance of intimate intercourse with Normandy (after 1204), and the gradual absorption of the Norman element in the population accelerated the decay of Anglo-Norman. For a long time, however, it maintained itself as the language of the aristocracy. In the fourteenth century it was used by William Twich in his *Art de Venerye* (a treatise on hawking), by Sir Thomas Gray in his *Scalacronica* (1355), and in many satires and political songs. The regulations of this University were drawn up in Latin and French,³ and students were forbidden to converse in any other language;⁴ and when Bishop Stapeldon

¹ It has been pointed out that the vernacular of English Jews remained French up to the time of their expulsion, 1290 (cf. Schofield, *English Literature*, p. 64). In Southampton, French remained the official language of the Guild Merchants until the middle of the fifteenth century (cf. Studer, *Supplement to Oak Book*, pp. 8, 9).

² F. J. Tanqueray, *Recueil de lettres anglo-françaises*, Paris, 1916.

³ *Munimenta Academica*, 437 'Item diligenter debent attendere quod Scholares sui regulam observent in Latinis vel in Romanis, prout exigunt status diversi, et non observantes bene puniantur'.

⁴ Cf. Statutes of Oriel Coll. (1328) and Exeter Coll. (1330), quoted by Warton, *The Hist. of Engl. Poetry*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 5.

wished the nuns of Polsloe Priory fully to understand his meaning, he drew up his injunctions not in English but in Anglo-Norman.¹ When native production began to run thin, continental writers lent their good offices. The exploits of the Black Prince were told by a Walloon for the benefit of an English audience,² and for generations the chronicles of Froissart continued to find appreciative readers in this country. Although pleading in English was allowed after 1362, French remained the official language of the law down to the reign of Henry VIII, and lingered on until the eighteenth century.³ Even to-day the Royal assent to a Bill is still expressed in French. But notwithstanding these late survivals, Anglo-Norman was a dead language by the middle of the fourteenth century.

Between the Norman tongue of the eleventh century and the French spoken in England at the close of the fourteenth, the difference is obviously enormous, but there is considerable evidence that, in spite of rapid changes, the language was at all periods substantially the same in every part of the country. No doubt, writers of continental birth, like Marie de France, Denis Piramus, or Frère Angier, retained some of the idiosyncrasies of their native dialect. Hesitation prevailed in the pronunciation of certain sounds for which English had no exact equivalent, e.g. French *u*. Investigations in this field are very complicated on account of the notorious inconsistency of Anglo-Norman scribes. The

¹ *The Register of Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter*, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, 1892 (A.D. 1319), p. 316.

² *Life of the Black Prince*, ed. M. K. Pope, and E. C. Lodge, Oxford, 1910. Tanqueray, however, questions Miss Pope's conclusion that the author was a Walloon and claims the work for the A.-N. literature. Cf. *Évolution du verbe*, pp. 818-19, 840.

³ *The Reports of Cases* by E. Lutwyche († 1709) are drawn up half in French, half in Latin. Cf. Vising, *Franska Språket i England*, iii, p. 34.

spelling became even more confused when the revival of Middle-English writing introduced into French various peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon orthography (e.g. the spellings *ea* and *eo*). Allowance must be made also for those 'uplondisse men' who, like William of Wadington, were reared in the country, where there was neither *burg ne cité*, and wrote a language of which they readily admitted they had but an imperfect knowledge. The rise of Paris as a seat of learning and the home of a brilliant court finally established for all times the superiority of Parisian French over other dialects, even over Provençal and Anglo-Norman, and made it the literary language of the whole of France. The vocabulary, and especially the spelling, of Anglo-Norman was bound to be affected to some extent. Later writers, like Gower, even endeavoured to write Parisian French.¹ But on the whole, the uniformity of the dialect was very little, if at all, impaired. From the twelfth century onward, Anglo-Norman was and remained a distinct language. Foreigners like Garnier, the biographer of Thomas Becket, might pride themselves on the superiority of their speech, because it was acquired abroad; ² Welshmen like Walter Map ³ might poke fun at 'Marlborough French'; the fact remains, that 'Marlborough French' or French 'after the scole of Stratford atte Bowe' was the language current throughout the country. It is true that Luces de

¹ Tanqueray (*op. cit.*, pp. 828 sq.) has also detected the influence of N.-E. and E.-French on verbal endings, after 1250. This influence is chiefly noticeable in non-literary texts, and would seem to have affected the spelling rather than the pronunciation.

² 'Mis languages est buens; car en France fui nez,' v. 5820.

³ Referring to a certain Gaufridus, bishop elect of Lincoln, Map says: 'Cessit igitur apud Merleburgam, ubi fons est quem si quis, ut aiunt, gustaverit, Gallice barbarizat, unde cum viciose quis illa lingua loquitur, dicimus eum loqui Gallicum Merleburge,' *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. M. R. James (Anecdota Oxoniensia), 1914, p. 246.

Gast¹ and the anonymous author of the *Poème sur l'Antéchrist*² blushed to confess, like Madame Eglentyne, that 'Frensh of Paris was to hem unknowe'. But the majority of their countrymen were quite content with the knowledge of what was still a fashionable and aristocratic language. John Peckham (†1292), a distinguished Oxford teacher, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, continued to write his letters in Anglo-Norman, although he had studied and taught many years in the University of Paris.³ Even in the fourteenth century, when Parisian French had long outdistanced other dialects as a literary medium, the French language spoken in England was still fairly uniform. The testimony of Higden (c. 1350) has often been cited, but has hardly been sufficiently appreciated. In his *Polycronicon* (lib. i, cap. 59) he says: 'Ubi nempe mirandum videtur, quomodo nativa et propria Anglorum lingua, in unica insula coartata, pronunciatione ipsa sit tam diversa; cum tamen Normannica lingua, quae adventitia est, univoca maneat penes cunctos.' Which John of Trevisa quaintly renders (after 1385): 'Hit semeth a greet wonder how Englishe, that is the burthe tonge of Englisshemen and her owne langage and tonge, is so dyverse of sown in this oon ilond, and the langage of Normandie is comlynge (imported) of another londe, and hath oon manere soun among alle men that speketh hit aright in Engelond.' And he further adds: 'Nevertheless there is as many dyvers manere Frensche in the reem of Fraunce as is dyvers manerè Englishe in the reem of Engelond.' Which shows that he was well able to tell one dialect from another. He was an educated man and remarkably well informed. Above all he

¹ Cf. E. Löseth, *Le roman en prose de Tristan*, Paris, 1891, p. 2.

² Mr. A. Rowlands of Jesus College has in preparation an edition of this poem.

³ F. J. Tanqueray, *Recueil de lettres anglo-françaises*, Paris, 1916, p. xvi.

was an Oxford man and a fellow of my own college (Exeter). Surely we could not desire a more trustworthy witness. The tradition of a homogeneous Anglo-Norman speech was still alive in 1415 when an enterprising (Oxford?) teacher produced his *Dialogues Français*¹ for the benefit of young gentlemen who desired to acquire a knowledge of Parisian (?). When asked for his name, the pupil is made to answer: 'J'ai a noun Johan bon enfant, beal et sage et bien parlant engleys, fraunceys et bon normand.' 'Good' Norman still ranked as an independent language by the side of English and Parisian French. Modern scholarship, too, has greatly strengthened our case. A careful study of the vocabulary of Middle-English led Professor Behrens² to the conclusion that the French words taken up by the English language before the end of the fourteenth century point, almost without exception, to a Norman origin. This view has been confirmed by recent investigations, e.g. those of J. M. Booker on *The French inchoative suffix in Middle-English*,³ and of Zachrisson on the *Anglo-Norman influence on English Place-Names*.⁴ For a final solution of the problem we must of course wait until Anglo-Norman has been more systematically studied; but two points at least seem fairly established: (1) That Anglo-Norman was not a jargon but an independent language, as homogeneous in character as the majority of French dialects.⁵ (2) That it

¹ P. Meyer, *Romania*, xxxii, pp. 49 sq.

² *Französische Studien*, v, pp. 105 sq., 309 sq., and Paul's *Grundriss*, i, pp. 960 sq.

³ Dissertation, Heidelberg, 1912.

⁴ R. E. Zachrisson, *A contribution to the Study of A.-N. Influence on English Place-Names*, Lund, 1909.

⁵ This view has been greatly strengthened by Tanqueray's masterly study of the A.-N. verb, to which reference has already been made. He sums up his results as follows: 'Ces quelques idées a priori laissent donc supposer que l'anglo-français a été autre chose qu'une mauvaise manière de parler et d'écrire le français; ce sont des preuves véritables

was closely related to continental Norman, from which it derived its phonetic system and the bulk of its vocabulary. No one will deny that it also borrowed from other sources; but even Francien (Parisian French) includes in its vocabulary elements from almost every province of France. The statement of Paul Meyer¹ that 'il y avait en Angleterre plusieurs espèces de français comme il y a maintenant en Grèce plusieurs espèces de grec' must therefore be revised, or at least qualified; and with it disappears the strongest argument of those who urge that 'Anglo-French' is a more appropriate term than 'Anglo-Norman'. Gröber² was, I believe, the first to use 'Anglo-French' in this sense, but American and German scholars have almost without exception retained 'Anglo-Norman'. In France and England usage has varied, and many have, like myself, made confusion worse by using both terms indiscriminately. The desirability of arriving at an agreement must be obvious to every one, and I trust I have given adequate reasons for preferring 'Anglo-Norman'.

In my attempt to show that Anglo-Norman was a homogeneous language with distinctly Norman characteristics, I have broadly outlined its history down to the close of the fourteenth century. There remains the more difficult and delicate task of forming an estimate of the value (literary or linguistic) of the records which have been preserved. So many works are accessible only in MSS. or in faulty

que nous en trouvons dans l'étude que nous avons faite sur le verbe. Celle-ci met en évidence quatre points, que révélerait également toute étude générale sur l'anglo-français: d'abord l'unité de la langue dans un ouvrage donné; puis l'unité de la langue à un moment donné; ensuite l'évolution réelle qu'on peut observer pendant les trois siècles de son existence; enfin l'influence restreinte exercée sur elle par l'anglais,' p. ii.

¹ *Romania*, xxiv, p. 362.

² *Zeitsch. f. rom. Phil.*, vi (1882), p. 486.

editions that a final verdict cannot yet be passed. But from the material already available we may infer that, apart from the masterpieces of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there is little that bears the mark of superior talent. When the *élan* of the premature Renaissance had spent itself, the neglect of form and style became increasingly evident. The Normans established in England never again caught the true epic spirit so conspicuous in the *Chanson de Roland*; although their delight in lives of saints showed no sign of waning, they produced little that can bear comparison with *La Vie de Saint Alexis*. They were a people intensely practical, caring more for facts and ideas than for beautiful phrases. Their thirst for knowledge was unquenchable, their curiosity knew no bounds, but they had no stomach for pure sentimentality, and lyric poetry is feebly represented. In spite of the personal influence of Queen Eleanor and that of her sons, the songs of the troubadours found little echo in this country. On the other hand scientific works—as science was then understood—were in great demand. It was among the Normans of England that the *Physiologus*, the mediaeval text-book on natural history, was first translated into the vernacular (*Bestiaire* of Philippe de Thaun). The earliest French versions of Lapidaries appear also to be the result of their efforts.¹ Almanacs, prophecies, charms, medical recipes, cookery-books were plentifully supplied in prose and verse. Encyclopaedias, running to thousands of lines, were specially written for those unskilled in Latin. They can hardly be reckoned as specimens of literature, but they give us a comprehensive view of the beliefs and superstitions which were current in their days, and of the naïve theories which

¹ A final opinion must, however, be deferred until the question has been more fully investigated. In collaboration with Miss Joan Evans I am preparing an edition of all the extant A.-N. Lapidaries.

accounted for natural phenomena,¹ and explained their inner and higher significance. History proved equally attractive to the Normans. Whilst in France, with a few notable exceptions, it continued to be written in Latin down to the time of Froissart, England was flooded with a mass of chronicles rhymed in French. Some of the earliest, those of Wace in particular, reveal fine workmanship and a real desire to supply trustworthy information. The later products are generally much inferior, in point both of style and of trustworthiness; but even they can be turned to useful account by the modern historian.

The Renaissance of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was to some extent the outcome of a religious revival, which received its strongest impulse from Cluny, but found nowhere a wider scope than under the aegis of the Norman Rulers. Their people, although too deeply engrossed in the affairs of this world to be much given to mysticism, were nevertheless keenly interested in religion. As Jusserand puts it, 'The real religious poems we owe to the Normans are those poems in stone, erected by their architects at Ely, Canterbury, York, and Durham.'¹ Not content to provide stately buildings for monks and clerks, they claimed a share of their knowledge. The earliest translation into French of any section of the Bible, that of the Books of Kings,² was made in this country. Versions of the Psalter, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Book of Revelation, &c., followed in course of time. Poems based on Biblical stories are numerous and still imperfectly known, but they are surpassed in number by treatises on the Deadly Sins, the follies of mankind, poems on the Love of God,

¹ J. J. Jusserand, *A Literary History of the English People*, 2nd ed., London, 1907, vol. i, p. 124.

² Cf. *Li quatre livres des reis*, ed. E. R. Curtius, *Gesell. f. rom. Lit.*, 26. Bd., Dresden, 1911; and the review by A. Stimming, *Zeitsch. f. rom. Phil.* xxxvi, p. 743.

exhortations to saintly life, dull reading when judged by modern standards, but not devoid of interest as the source of some of the earliest Middle-English writings. But the real value of Anglo-Norman civilization lies in the new orientation it gave to human thought. By breaking down racial barriers it fostered an active interchange of ideas between nations which had kept aloof from one another. It engendered a true cosmopolitan spirit, a catholicity of taste, which yielded a plentiful harvest. Men and ideas were esteemed for their intrinsic value, or their personal qualities. Italians, Bretons, Frenchmen from every province were given equal opportunities to display their talents in State and Church. The court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine was a centre of learned men and poets, as well as of warriors and knights. The gain was immeasurable. 'Geographically belonging, with the Scandinavian countries, to the outlying lands of Europe, the British Isles', it has been said, 'had been in serious danger of sharing their remoteness from the general movement of European life and drifting into the backwater of history. The union with Normandy turned England southward, and brought it at once into the full current of European affairs.'¹ 'A spirit of adventure and enterprise, sound statesmanship and business capacity, an appreciation of art and literature, and above all a lively curiosity were grafted upon a nation which had grown effete and unnerved.

Norman literature, which had begun on the Continent with works of the highest promise, continued productive in England: *La Chanson de Roland* and *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* have been preserved in Anglo-Norman MSS., and both were translated or imitated in English. Richard Cœur-de-Lion, Fulk Fitz Warin, King Dermot became the heroes of new epic legends. But under a more peaceful

¹ Haskins, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

sky and more settled conditions, epic songs lost their war-like spirit and grew into romances of chivalry and adventure; and the stories of *Otinel* and *Fierabras* retained their popularity till well into the fifteenth century. So thoroughly did the Normans find themselves at home in this country, that by the end of the twelfth century they began to celebrate the exploits of their former foes. Guy of Warwick, the Saxon champion who overcame Colbrand the Dane, and the legendary Boeve of Hampton became epic figures as famous as Roland and Oliver, and won applause far beyond the compass of these Islands. It is less surprising to find Havelok and Horn extolled in similar manner, for they were after all of viking blood and the kinsmen of Ralph the Ganger.

Running through Norman literature there is a note of seriousness and piety. Boeve converts the giant Escopart and has him duly baptized. Guy of Warwick spends the evening of a boisterous life in the quietude of a monastery. If many warriors were sung in verse, they were as the grain of sand in the desert, compared with the multitude of saints who were similarly honoured. The legends that gathered round the names of saints are often very strange: orthodox teaching blends with ill-concealed pagan worship; true Christian piety and crude superstition are inextricably mingled. They hardly commend themselves as food for the soul, but as a rich mine of myth and folklore they would repay more careful study.¹ Closely connected with the Church was also the incipient Drama. The honour of producing the oldest extant play² in the vernacular belongs

¹ Prof. A. T. Baker, of Sheffield University, has facilitated such a study by his editions of the Lives of S. Richard (*Rev. Lang. Rom.* liii, 1910), S. Panuce (*Romania*, xxxviii), S. Paul l'Hermite (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* vi), S. Osith (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* vi-vii), and especially of S. Marie l'Égyptienne (*Rev. Lang. Rom.* lix, 1916-17).

² *Le Mystère d'Adam*, ed. P. Studer, 1918.

to an Anglo-Norman poet endowed with real dramatic skill and instinct. Religious spectacles with their impressive display could scarcely fail to become popular and were continued in English when French went out of use. The *Mystère d'Adam* has been preserved in a single MS., likewise the *Anglo-Norman Resurrection*, and many links connecting the English Miracles with the Norman drama must have been irretrievably lost.¹

But the Normans did more than endow England with epic literature, legends of saints, and the elements of dramatic art. They brought the country once more into contact with Latin civilization. Many classical themes, the story of *Troy*, that of *Thebes*, the Romance of *Eneas* penetrated into this Island through the medium of French; together with tales from the distant East, of *Alexander*, of *Prester John*, of the *Sleepers of Ephesus*, to mention but a few at random; and when they ceased to be read in French, they retained their popularity in English adaptations.

By imparting to England something of the spirit of the classics and preparing the way for the greater Renaissance, the Normans have done a service which has hardly been adequately appreciated.² But from the point of view of literature their greatest merit has been to open to Western Europe the treasure-house of Celtic imagination. For centuries Saxons had lived side by side with Celts, as foes or peaceful neighbours, without even suspecting that any good might come from Wales or Ireland! No sooner had the

¹ Miss Foster has recently shown that the *Towneley Plays* were derived to a considerable extent from the *Northern Passion*, the ME. adaptation of an A.-N. poem, illustrating incidentally another channel through which A.-N. contributed to the development of the English drama. Cf. *Northern Passion*, E.E.T.S., original series, 145 and 147 (1913-16).

² The problem has been ably discussed by J. E. C. de Montmorency in the *Edinburgh Review*, Jan., 1919.

Normans settled in this country than new and wonderful tales began to stir the imagination of high and low. They told of travels to those enchanted islands in the Western Seas, whither Abbot Brendan journeyed with his forty monks; or they told of castles peopled with invisible hosts, of boats steered by invisible hands, of fairies who sought the love of mortal men, of maidens changed into white harts, of magic bows and swords, of sorcerers and seers. Other tales there were of a mysterious passion which the world had never before experienced. It was not the sensuous love of the Frenchman, nor the elemental passion of the Saxon, neither was it the lip-worship proffered by the troubadours, nor yet the fateful spell known to the ancients. It was the irresistible but complex feeling, mystical yet sensual, which united Tristan and Iseult, caused them to disregard all conventions, yet never lowered them in their own estimation. The manner in which these new themes penetrated into French literature is still to some extent a matter of dispute. But whether bilingual Bretons or Welsh bards equipped with sufficient French served as intermediaries between Celts and Normans, whether the contact was established through serious scholars or through strolling minstrels, in England or on the Continent, one thing seems certain, namely, that these themes in the hands of Anglo-Normans acquired a fecundity which they never possessed in Welsh or in Irish. Blending with religious aspirations they yielded the most beautiful of Christian legends, the *Holy Grail*. Exposed to the vivifying influence of the chivalry of Northern France and to the refinement of Provence, they grew into those exquisite stories of *Arthur* and his knights, which permanently endowed English literature with a most powerful source of inspiration.

Although Anglo-Norman means so much to England, it has been little studied and appreciated in this country.

'On s'étonne que l'Angleterre, pour qui l'ancien français est une langue nationale presque autant que pour la France, ne l'étudie pas avec plus d'ardeur et ne consacre pas, notamment, plus de travaux à la langue et à la littérature anglo-normande'.¹ Thus wrote a distinguished French Scholar some twenty-five years ago, and, sad to relate, his words have fallen on deaf ears. Interest in the subject would seem to have waned rather than increased. A century and a half ago Warton did not think that a correct estimate of Middle-English poetry could be formed if Anglo-Norman works were left out of consideration. Thomas Wright shared the same conviction and laboured unceasingly to secure a proper appreciation of Anglo-Norman writers.² More recent critics have seldom followed their good example. *The Cambridge History of English Literature* devotes special chapters to Anglo-Saxon and to the Latin literature produced in England, but refers only incidentally to Anglo-Norman production. Jusserand,³ it is true, pays more attention to the subject, but almost confines himself to an analysis of French influences in England.

Continental text-books refer to Anglo-Norman writers in so far only as they fit into the great literary movements of France. G. Paris indeed attempted to do them justice in his *Littérature française au moyen âge*.⁴ H. Suchier in his *Geschichte der französischen Literatur* made them the object of a separate study which can still be consulted with

¹ *Romania*, xxiv (1895), p. 158.

² The name of Francisque Michel, the indefatigable editor of A.-N. texts, should also be mentioned in this connexion.

³ J. J. Jusserand, *op. cit.*, 1st ed., 1894.

⁴ G. Paris has also contributed a number of useful articles, e.g., a review of Suchier's work (*Mélanges de littérature française*, pp. 21 sq.), 'La Littérature normande avant l'annexion' (*Mélanges*, pp. 71 sq.), 'L'Esprit normand en Angleterre' (*Poésie au moyen âge*, 2^e série, pp. 45-74).

profit. J. Vising has devoted to the subject a life-long interest and published some able monographs,¹ but it is a matter of regret that his best work (*Franska Språket i England*, Göteborg, 1900-02) is written in Swedish and not accessible to the average English student. The fullest account of Anglo-Norman literature is from the pen of W. H. Schofield, a Harvard Professor. His *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (London, 1906; reprinted, 1914) gives an excellent bird's-eye view of the whole subject, and lays due stress upon the dependence of Middle-English upon Anglo-Norman. But the work, while it is well suited to the needs of the average reader, is not sufficiently detailed, nor provided with adequate bibliographical information to meet the requirements of scholars. A 'Manual' is wanted which will give an account of what is still in MS., and will co-ordinate the information scattered in periodicals, monographs, bulletins, &c., by such a prodigious worker as the late Paul Meyer. I have collected a considerable amount of material which might form the basis of such a Manual, but nothing of permanent value can be attempted before the libraries of this country have been thoroughly investigated.²

A true appreciation of Anglo-Norman literature is hardly possible until more texts have been edited, and several of the existing editions revised and corrected. Here is a great opportunity for young philologists desirous of acquiring useful experience. The careful editing of a text affords an excellent exercise. It stimulates the initiative and sharpens the critical faculties. Moreover the field is wide and

¹ *Étude sur le dialecte anglo-normand du xii^e siècle*, Upsala, 1882; *Sur la versification anglo-normande*, Upsala, 1884, &c.

² For MSS. containing texts of a scientific nature, this investigation is being carried on with admirable thoroughness by Dr. Singer of Exeter College. It is earnestly to be hoped that he will ultimately turn his attention to the remaining MSS. also.

provides for a variety of tastes. Some texts offer a purely linguistic interest; others can best be studied in connexion with the Middle-English works derived from them. Typical examples of the latter kind are the *History of the Holy Rood tree* by the late Professor Napier (E. E. T. S. No. 103, 1894) and the *Northern Passion* by Miss Foster (see above). In his book on *Gawain and the Green Knight*¹ Professor Kittredge has recently shown how much a practised and subtle critic can extract from the comparative study of these early texts.

A comprehensive 'Grammar' of Anglo-Norman is another desideratum. The work of Menger² contains a useful collection of facts, but lays no claim to completeness or critical treatment. Tanqueray's study of the evolution of the verb in Anglo-Norman³ is more exhaustive. It is a praiseworthy attempt to solve a most intricate problem. Although some of the conclusions may have to be revised in the light of fuller knowledge, a great part of the work will prove of permanent value. The comparative study of Middle-English and Anglo-Norman philology has already yielded interesting results,⁴ but there is ample room for

¹ G. L. Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight*, Harvard Univ., 1916.

² L. E. Menger, *The Anglo-Norman Dialect*, Columbia Univ., 1904.

³ F. J. Tanqueray, *L'Évolution du verbe en anglo-français (xii^e-xiv^e siècles)*, Paris, 1915.

⁴ I refer especially to works like the following: Sturmfels, 'Der altfr. Vokalismus im Mittlenglischen bis zum Jahre 1400' (*Anglia*, viii), 1885; Eikenkel, *Streifzüge durch die mittlengl. Syntax*, 1887; Behrens, 'Zur Lautlehre der französischen Lehnwörter im Mittlenglischen' (*Franz. Studien*, v), and 'Die französischen Elemente im Englischen' (Paul's *Grundriss*, i, pp. 799 sq.); Brinkmann, *Syntax des Französischen und Englischen*; Burghardt, 'Über den Einfluss des Englischen auf das Anglonormannische' (*Studien zur engl. Phil.* xxiv, Halle, 1906); Zachrisson, *Anglo-Norman Influence on English Place-names* (Lund, 1909); Bødtker, *Critical Contribution to Early English Syntax* (Christiania, 1910); Gadde, *On the History and Use of the Suffixes -ery, -age*

further investigation. The abundant material supplied by Professor Wright's *Dictionary of English Dialects* should be carefully explored.¹ Some use might be made also of local records. Many boroughs have a considerable number of documents in Anglo-Norman and Middle-English which would repay examination.²

Finally, every student of Anglo-Norman has felt the need of a trustworthy 'Dictionary'.³ Kelham's work is notoriously incomplete and unreliable. Godefroy records Anglo-Norman forms and meanings to a very limited extent. Tobler's Dictionary, now in course of publication, is equally incomplete in this respect.⁴ Brüll's list⁵ is necessarily of limited value. The *New English Dictionary*, especially in the later volumes, contains a mass of valuable material but, like Brüll's list, confines its attention to words which actually occur in English texts. I would humbly suggest that an *Oxford Dictionary of Anglo-Norman* would constitute a worthy sequel to the *English Dictionary*.

The programme which I have outlined is so vast that it calls for the friendly rivalry and collaboration of scholars in every country. Nothing is further from my mind than the suggestion that Oxford should monopolize these studies.

and -ment in English (Lund, 1910); Booker, *The French inchoative Suffix -ss and the French -ir conjugation in ME.* (Heidelberg, 1912).

¹ J. Derocquigny, *A contribution to the study of the French Element in English* (Lille, 1904), lays stress on the valuable information that could be derived from that source.

² I have devoted considerable attention to the records of Southampton (cf. my edition of *The Oak Book of Southampton*, 3 vols., 1910-11, *The Port Books of Southampton*, 1913), and I hope at some future date to complete my investigation.

³ The want of such a dictionary was particularly emphasized by the late Prof. Maitland.

⁴ See my review of the first part of Tobler's Dictionary in *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, xii (1917), p. 100.

⁵ H. Brüll, *Untergegangene und veraltete Worte des Französischen im heutigen Englischen*, Halle, 1913.

But I hope that we shall rise to the occasion, and not let others do *all* the work. For, let me ask, 'Is there a more fitting place for the study of Anglo-Norman than Oxford?' It was in the priory of St. Frideswide that Frère Angier wrote the legend of St. Gregory. It was in Oxford, too, that Peter of Peckham completed his *Lumière as Laïs*, the most successful Anglo-Norman encyclopaedia. The chronicler Nicholas Trivet was proud of his Oxford training, and the University still cherishes the memory of its first Chancellor, Robert Grosseteste—even though it may have forgotten that this distinguished teacher and divine was perhaps the ablest Anglo-Norman writer of his day.¹ More names could be quoted, and who could tell how much of the anonymous literature of the age emanated from scholars of this University. But we have much more than vague memories or venerable traditions. We possess in our libraries the products of their labour, the books which they wrote, numerous manuscripts which have been thumbed by compilers of catalogues or foreign palaeographers, but which have never been adequately studied. Like the ancient buildings that house them they are a rich legacy of the past, which it is our privileged duty not only to hold in trust, but to utilize for the benefit of sound learning.

The revived interest in Modern Languages, which is very evident in Oxford to-day, cannot fail to react favourably on the study of Anglo-Norman. Already we see hopeful signs of greater activity in this long neglected field.²

¹ His principal work in A.-N. is *Le Château d'amour*. The great popularity of this fine allegorical poem is attested by the large number of MSS. still extant, and by the English translations which appeared in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Cf. ed. J. Murray, Paris, 1918.

² The following editions are in active preparation:

(1) *A Year-Book of Edward II* (for the Selden Soc.), by Miss M. K. Pope (to whose valuable *Étude sur la langue de Frère Angier*

and edition of *The Life of the Black Prince* reference has already been made); Miss Pope is also contemplating an edition of the *Horn Romance*.

(2) *Le Voyage de Saint Brendan*, by E. G. R. Waters, Taylorian Lecturer in French.

(3) *The Treatise of Walter de Bibbesworth*, by C. T. Onions, Joint-Editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

(4) *Poème sur l'Antéchrist et le Jugement dernier*, by A. Rowlands, Jesus College.

(5) *Anglo-Norman Lapidaries*, by Miss Joan Evans and Paul Studer.

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